

SERVING THE LORD

NO. 885

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 15, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Serving the Lord.”
Romans 12:11.

THE harmony of Scripture is admirable. Everything is proportionate and balanced. He who weighed the mountains in scales has had a clear eye to the adjustment of truth in His word. Within these pages you find a sufficiency of doctrine, for it is the basis of practice; you read abundance of promise, for it is the support of perseverance; but you also meet with frequency of precept, for it is the spur and guide of holiness. We could not afford to dispense with a verse of Holy Writ; the removal of a single text, like the erasure of a line of a great epic, would mar the completeness, and connection of the whole; as well pluck a gem from the high priest's breastplate as erase a line of revelation. Absolutely perfect are the proportions of inspired truth, and it is noteworthy that *practical* truth has the greatest prominence, for it has been remarked by an able divine, that for every exhortation that we have in the New Testament to pray, we have five commands either to work or to give. While the doctrinal part of Scripture is exceedingly full, the practical part is not one whit less copious, and indeed, the proportion which in Christ's ministry was given to instruction in practical godliness is vastly larger than the share allotted to it in most modern ministries. God has given to us in Scripture something concerning every necessary thing, but most of all upon the most necessary, namely, holy living. As the Lord distributes, so must we receive; we are not to neglect the knowledge of the doctrines of grace; we are diligently to feed upon the promises, but we are also with affection and reverence, to regard the precepts.

In the verse before us, this same harmony is noteworthy. “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, *serving the Lord.*” The ordinary duties of our calling we are not called upon to *forget*—we are not to neglect the shop for the sanctuary, or the counting house for the class meeting. The legs of a fool are not equal but the holiness of a believer should always be well arranged. Whatever our position in life may be, we are so to order our conduct in it as to commend ourselves for diligence and uprightness both to the church, and to the world. The Christian is not to be a worse tradesman because of his religion, but a better one; he is not to be a less skilled mechanic, but he is to be all the more careful in his work. It were indeed a pity if Paul's tents were the worst in the store, and Lydia's purple of the poorest dye; at the same time, observe how the next clause calls our equal attention to the higher, and more spiritual matter, “*Fervent in spirit.*” We must not neglect the *spiritual* because of the pressing demands of the temporal. Perhaps we are more likely to forget this precept than the former, therefore let us lay it the more to heart. We are to maintain the holy fire within our souls constantly burning, for that is the meaning of “*fervent.*” Our love to God must not merely be there in a small degree, but it must exist as a vigorous flame; our spirit must be kept warmly zealous, burningly affectionate; our spiritual nature is to glow like coals of fire. The keystone of the arch of life is to be a desire for God's glory. At this point the public and the private, the bodily and the spiritual, are to be as one—both in business diligence, and spiritual fervency we are to set the Lord always before us. Our everyday labor is to be consecrated into priestly sacrifice, our inward fervor is to be like temple incense, and so our bodies being temples of the Holy Spirit, we are ever to remain “serving the Lord.”

My aim in this sermon will be to call upon my believing brothers and sisters to fulfill in their lives the meaning of the words which we have now selected as our text, “*Serving the Lord,*” or as it might be rendered, “*doing the part of servants towards God.*” “*Servantizing*”—waiting as servants upon the Most High.

I. And first, I shall have to notice THE ESSENTIALS OF ALL TRUE SERVICE TO GOD.

No one will fail to see that the very first essential must be that *the man who would render service must beforehand be accepted as a servant*. If a stranger should of his own accord, visit your farm, and should commence driving the horses, milking the cows, reaping the wheat, and so on—if you had never employed him, he would be fulfilling the part of an *intruder* rather than the office of a servant. Now, it is not every man who is fit to be a servant of God. In fact, in our fallen condition, none of us can be received into His household, even as hired servants; how should the thrice holy God be served by hands unwashed from sin? Lepers cannot stand at His altar, or the deformed dwell within His gates; unregenerate man cannot serve God—their thoughts and ways are evil and defiled. Unto the wicked, God says, “What have you to do to declare My statutes?” No form of homage rendered by the wicked can be acceptable; until the person is justified, the work cannot be received. Dear friend, think of this! You must first of all be taken into the Lord’s employment before you can render Him service! Let me ask you then, are you in very deed and truth a servant of the Lord? Have you been bought with the great Master’s money? In other words, have you been ransomed by the death of Jesus Christ? Have you been redeemed, not with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus? For only the redeemed ones are reckoned by the Lord as servants in His household; the ungodly are slaves to Satan, and even in their attempts at religion they display their loyalty to the powers of evil! You must first of all be loosed from your natural bondage, and set free with a price! And then, and then only, can you be the servant of the Most High. Answer this question to your heart and conscience, dear hearer!

He who is God’s servant has been won by power as well as bought with a price! How does this fact strike you? Has a strong hand snatched you from servitude to your former tyrant? Have you been compelled by divine grace to leave your sins, and to commence another course of life? No man comes to Jesus except he is drawn of the Father; no man leaves the service of folly unless compelled by divine grace! Have you been so drawn? Israel would forever have made bricks in Egypt if the Lord had not brought forth His people with a high hand, and an outstretched arm. Do you know what the mighty working of His power means? Has sovereign grace subdued you? Have you in very deed been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son? If you know not these things, little avails it that you pretend to hear the Lord, for your profession is hollow and vain!

True servants of God, again, are always such as are born in His house as well as bought with His money—“You must be born-again.” Preliminary to all holy service must be regeneration; the fruit of the wild olive will still be wild, water it as you may; that which comes from the crab will still be sour, plant the tree where you will. Man’s *nature* must be changed! A lion cannot plow as an ox, or carry a rider as a horse; a sinner is unsuitable for service till he is newly created. Have you received then, from God, a change—a radical change which has affected your nature, and made you a new man in Christ Jesus? If so, then you may not only *talk* of service, but joyously *enter* into it! But if not, to labor to perform holy works is to try to bear flowers without roots, to build a house without a foundation, to make a garment without cloth. You must begin with faith in Jesus. You must first experience a work done within you *by God* before you can go forward to work for the Lord.

Next to this, it is vitally necessary that in all our service, we sincerely and simply render our obedience *to the Lord Himself*. Much that is done religiously is not done unto God; a sermon may be preached, and contain excellent truth, and the language in which the truth of God is stated may be everything that could be desired, and yet the service rendered may be to the *hearers*, or to the man’s own self, and not to God at all! You may go to your Sunday school class, and with great perseverance you may instruct those little children, but yet you may have served your fellow teachers or the general community rather than have served your God! To whom do you look for a reward? Whose smile is it that gladdens you? Whose frown would depress you? Whose honor do you seek in all that you are doing? Remember that which is uppermost in your heart is your Master; if your deepest motive is to *seem* to be active, to *appear* to be diligent, and to win commendation for taking your share in the church’s work, you have not served God—you have sacrificed unto others! O beloved, this is a point which though it is very simple to *speak* of, is indeed very searching if it is brought home to heart and conscience—for then much of that which glitters will be found not to be gold, and the glory of much apparently excellent serving will dissolve in smoke. The glory of the Lord must be the *sole* objective of your labor! The pursuit of His glory must, like a clear crystal stream, run through the whole of your life, or you are not yet His servant.

Sinister motives and selfish aims are the death of true godliness; search and look lest these betray you unawares.

Furthermore, in all true service of God it is essential that we serve Him in *the way of His appointment*. You would be grievously plagued if you had in your house a woman who was continually running up and down stairs, roaming into every room, opening every closet, moving this piece of furniture, and dusting that, and generally keeping up a perpetual stir and worry. You would not call this service, but *annoyance*. All that is done contrary to orders is disobedience, not service. And if anything is done without orders, it may be excessive activity, but it certainly is not service. Alas, my brothers and sisters, how many think they are serving God when they have never looked to the statute book; they have not turned to the commandments of the great King as we have them written in His word, but have rendered to Him will-worship! They worship after their own fashion and fancy, thinking this to be good because it is artistic; believing that to be proper because it is usual; conceiving a third thing to be right because it is antique, but forgetting that the word of God is the standard, and *nothing* is service which is not commanded in Holy Scripture. O that the church, in all her activities, would look to this, for she cumber herself with much serving and for the most part the cumbering does not come from duties prescribed for her by her Lord, but from observances which she has invented for herself! Upon you, dear friends, I press this point. How are your lives ordered? I ask you the question, for I desire to ask it of myself. Have you had an eye to your Master's mind in what you have done in religious matters? Has it occurred to you frequently, and does it occur to you constantly, to see what the Lord would have you do? Otherwise I warn you that you may be borne along the rapid stream of church activity in the channel of mere *tradition*, and may never render acceptable homage to your Lord. Or you may be restlessly busy on your own account, and after your own will, but your exertions will not be service to God because you consulted not His will. As a disciple you must bow your neck to the yoke of Christ! As the eyes of handmaidens are to their mistress, so must your eyes be unto the Lord for direction and command. What the King bids you, you must do; what He does *not* bid you has no power over your conscience, even though pope and prelates decree it. Have you all had respect unto His commandments? I will ask concerning one of them—have you, as believers, been obedient to His *command* to be baptized? Have you given this answer of a good conscience towards God? “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” As plainly as anything in Scripture, it seems, at least to us, that believers' baptism is commanded! Have you attended to it? No, some of you know your duty, but you do it not! I pray the Holy Spirit to convince you of your sinful neglect, and to lead you into *all* the commandments of your Lord. Our will must bow, and our heart must obey, or otherwise we shall be strangers to “*serving the Lord*.”

Furthermore, it is essential to all true and acceptable service that we serve God *in His strength*. Those who attempt to perfect holiness without waiting upon the Holy Spirit for power will be as foolish as the apostles would have been if they had commenced preaching at once, and had forgotten the Master's exhortation, “Tarry at Jerusalem until power be given to you from on high.” “You cannot serve the Lord,” said Joshua to Israel; they were very earnest, they were very intent upon it, but he knew the weakness of their nature, and he said to them—“*You cannot serve the Lord*.” None of us can honor the Lord except as we daily derive strength from the fountain of all power. My dear hearer, are you accustomed to fall on your face before the living God, conscious of your weakness? And do you plead with Him to gird you with His strength, and then in that God-given vigor, do you go forth to the field of labor? If not—if your work is done in the strength of the flesh, it shall be but fleshly work, and shall wither as the green herb, for you will be sure to give yourself the honor of your own doings, and therefore God will not accept or confirm what your own strength has worked. The last testing hour, which shall try *every* man's work, of what sort it is, will be certain to consume all that came from carnal nature. Solenn thought nothing will last but that which was worked by divine power; all the works of man shall be burnt up; no achievement of our own will appear on the record of celestial fame. Whatever we may have thought we had done, if it has been performed in the strength of the flesh, shall as certainly dissolve as the iceberg floating in the warm current of the Gulf Stream melts as it is borne along! O Holy Spirit, help us, that our works, being done in Your strength, may be established of God!

Once more, it is essential to the perfection of Christian service that *we stand continually ready to obey the Lord's will in anything and everything without distinction*. We cannot serve the Lord if we pick

and choose our duties; he who enlists in the army of the Most High surrenders his will to the discipline of the army, and the bidding of the Captain. Whatever Christ bids any of us do in the future, we must unhesitatingly perform. It may be that His finger will point to distant lands—there we must go cheerfully; we must follow the pillar of cloud without repining; we may be called to posts of labor for which we feel ourselves to be inadequate; we may be bid to attempt work from which our spirit as yet recoils—but if we are called to it, it is not ours to ask the reason why—it is ours, if necessary, even to *dare and die* in serving the Lord. What have you to do with finding strength? It is His to give it to you in your hour of need! What have you to do with likes or dislikes? Servants must like that which their masters bid them! Man, your will must be subdued! Your prejudices, instead of being pampered, must be destroyed! You must be as willing to be a hewer of wood, and a drawer of water as to be a prince and a standard-bearer; you must be as content to teach a little child his letters for Christ, as to testify the gospel before an audience of kings; to you it must be equal whether you shall sit on a throne for Christ, or rot in a dungeon for Christ! He only is a sincere servant who is intent upon doing the *whole* of his Lord's will, let that will be what it may.

I wish I could in more attractive style describe this service, but let this suffice—I am persuaded, brothers and sisters, that serving the Lord is not a merely external and outward religion, but it is a matter of the heart, and of the soul; it is a matter of the conscience, and of the affections. Serving the Lord is not a thing of fits and starts, spasms and excitements—it is a constant, thorough, practical, universal subservience to the mind of the Most High. Serving the Lord is not mere thought, scheme, plan, resolution—it is actually spending and being spent! It is the exercise of all the energies of nature, and of all the energies of divine grace in the cause of Him from whom all energy is derived. May a life of holy diligence accurately expound in our case what it is to be “*serving the Lord*.”

II. I shall now mention in the second place, for the help and guidance of earnest spirits, **SOME OF THE MODES IN WHICH WE MAY AT THIS DAY SERVE THE LORD.**

It was an ordinance of King David that all the soldiers in the army should share in the spoil. Certain of the warriors did not go down to the fight, but guarded the supplies, as guards of the baggage, but these were accounted to be as true soldiers as those who joined in the actual conflict, and therefore I would say a word first to those of you who cannot serve the Lord in the direct activities which are required of the most of us—I mean those who are prevented by the Lord's own providential act from fulfilling all that is incumbent upon others. Dear brothers and sisters—if from sickness, lack of education, or from your position in life you have had no opportunities to preach the word or even to teach it to a few—well, be it yours to remember that a quiet holy example is true service of God! If the tongue speaks not, yet if the *life* speaks, you shall have done God no small homage! If your actions are so guarded with holy care that your character in your station adorns the doctrine of God your Savior, though you shall scarcely be able to utter a sentence of actual gospel truth, yet your life shall ring in the ears of the unconverted! They shall take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus, and your example shall be blessed to them! If you cannot help the great cause of God in any other mode, at any rate there is open to you that of *fervent prayer*. How much may be done for the Master's kingdom by the “King's remembrancers,” who put Him in mind day by day of the agonies of His Son, and of His covenant and promise to give Him a widening dominion! I doubt not that many sick beds in England are doing more for Christ than our pulpits! Oh, what showers of blessings come down in answer to the prayers and tears of poor godly invalids whose weakness is their strength, and whose sickness is their opportunity! In all buildings there must be some unseen stones, and are not these very often the most important of all? In the very foundation of a church I would place those who are mighty in prayer! They are hidden, as it were, beneath the soil of obscurity where we cannot see them, but they are bearing up the entire structure! My dear afflicted brothers and sisters, when at any time you are cut off from the active ministries which have been your delight, solace yourselves with this—that your sacred patience under suffering, and your fervent prayers for the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom are a sacrifice of a sweet smell—holy and acceptable unto God!

But surely it will be possible in some way for the very weakest, and those in the worst circumstances to add something to this! Can you not speak, at least now and then, a word for Christ? Opportunities must occur to those placed in the most difficult positions; will you not seize them? I think once every

now and then, to the most ungodly husband, brother, or son, there must be an opportunity of saying a gracious word; at least sometimes to the friend visiting your sick bed there is an opportunity of dropping a word of consecrated admonition. But I can conceive some of you who are servants to be so placed that it would be wrong for you to be attending many assemblies for worship, or to be spending much time in evangelizing others; you are never to offer to God one duty stained with the blood of another! But I imagine that even under the worst conceivable circumstances, there must be opportunities which I hope you do not find it in your heart to neglect. Dear mother, with those babes around you, you have a field of labor among them; their little hearts, tender as they are, and so deeply susceptible to your influence—surely you can operate upon them! Nurse girls, governesses, and household servants—you need not go abroad for sacred labor; you have your proper spheres at home, and if you love God, you can serve Him right well in your position. You whose occupations engross your time from the first hour of the morning till the last at night—I cannot imagine that God has given, even to you, a Light which is covered with a bushel! You must have at least some cranny, some little slit from which your light may shine upon a dark world! Look for it, and remember that if your holy living, and your prayers can only be accompanied with the smallest possible service—if it is all that is possible—you shall be as much accepted as those who do far more! They who give thousands to the cause of Christ do well—but they do no better than the widow who having two mites, gave all. Take care that you give all, and giving all you have offered as much and more than some of us whose opportunities are ampler, and whose responsibilities are greater.

But while we have thus made room for comfort for those who stay with the supplies, we do not desire to console the idle, and therefore we remind you that few now present are among the class so graciously excused the rougher conflict. We have here a goodly company who are quite able to go down to the battle—unto those I shall now speak. Brothers, the form of service our Master most desires of us is comprehensively this—that we *make known the gospel of Jesus Christ!* It has been said that it is not our duty to convert nations, or even to save a single soul, and I believe there is truth in the assertion. It is not our *duty* to do what we cannot by any possibility do, since only *God* Himself can convert or regenerate a soul! Jesus did not command us to make men accept the gospel, but He has bid us to make *known* the gospel to every creature! In this London of ours, there ought not to be a single man or woman ignorant of the letter of the gospel! It is a sad proof of our idleness, our gross lack of zeal, that London is still so grossly ignorant of the gospel of Jesus Christ! In these British Isles there ought not to be a child who has attained the years of responsibility, and yet is not instructed in the things of the kingdom of God—not one, for if Christians were but a tenth as numerous as they are, they would be sufficient for the evangelizing of the United kingdom. Yes, brethren, had the church in the past been faithful, and were the church in the present faithful to God, and to His Christ, there is no reason why there should remain a district upon the surface of the globe, that is accessible to trade, which should not speedily be enlightened by the clear shining of the gospel of Jesus Christ! We are not responsible that the Hindu worships his idols; we are not responsible that the African adores his fetish, but we *are* responsible that the Hindu does not *know the gospel*, and that the African has not heard of the atoning sacrifice of Christ! We are to preach the gospel, and whether it is a savor of death unto death, or of life unto life, is left in God's hands. Whether men receive it or reject it is not with us—it is ours to *preach* to all men—to sow, though the wheat falls among tares, though it wastes on the highway, though it ultimately perishes on the stony ground; to sow everywhere is our duty, and the whole world is our field. I ask then, every Christian man here to listen to the voice of his risen Lord, and let His command appeal to his conscience. It is your bounden duty, every day of your life, to be making men to know the mystery which has been hid for ages, even the gospel of Jesus Christ—the glorious fact that He came into the world to save sinners, even the chief! How much are you doing for Christ, my brother? How much have you been doing for His cause today? How much are you going to do before the sun has set?

Now, under this, and through this, if we would serve the Lord Christ, we should, every one of us, aim at *the conversion of sinners*. I said that to *convert* them was not our duty—but I append to that statement this other assertion, that to *aim at their conversion* is our duty, and our privilege, and we are not to be self-complacently content with having merely spoken the truth of God—we are to look for signs following. I am to deliver the gospel message come what may, but I may well suspect some fault

in myself or in my testimony if the conversion of sinners does not follow upon it in *some* measure—for a true gospel is a soul-saving thing! When it comes, though all men are not saved by it, yet some are, and a company whose hearts God has touched will surely be brought out where His truth is honestly, earnestly, faithfully, prayerfully dispensed! It is a Christian's duty to be seeking always the salvation of all who come in his way. But I think especially of certain individuals who are laid on His heart. I shall now put a question which I daresay has passed through your minds before, but which I would like to tarry there. How many, my dear friend, were you ever the means of bringing to Jesus? You believe that they must perish everlastingly unless they have faith in Christ; how many have you personally prayed for? How many did you ever break your heart about? You believe that they must love Christ or be damned; how many have you ever talked to concerning Him who is the only Savior? To how many have you borne your testimony of His kindness, and His divine grace? Upon how many have you laid the tender hand to press them to follow after the Savior? Ah, well, the questions sound so trite as I put them, and perhaps as they come to your ears you are weary with them as being so commonplace. But by the great day of the appearing of our Lord, when He shall require of you an account of your stewardship, I implore you answer these inquiries, even if they humble you in the very dust! If the answer is painful, seek in the future that your course is mended, and as servants of Christ yearn over souls, and long, and sigh, and cry until at last you shall be able to say, "If they perish I have done my best, and their blood will not be required at my hands." I think I hear the devil whispering to some of you, "But that is the *preacher's* business." No, sirs, it is no business of mine to do *your* work! My work is stern enough; my responsibility is heavy enough; I cannot undertake yours. In the winning of souls no Christian can be proxy for another! The idea of supporting a missionary or supporting a minister to do my work for God is an idea that never ought to have crossed the Christian's mind! Jesus did not save you by proxy! He did not die for you in the person of another! He gave His own person—body, soul, and spirit—wholly for you! And by the love you bear Him, if indeed it is sincere, I pray you consecrate yourself this day anew to the bringing home of His banished ones, that Jesus may see of the travail of His soul.

A third form of usefulness must not be forgotten, and it is this—it should be the aim of all believers not merely to bring in the ungodly, but to endeavor to *reclaim backsliders*. Some backsliders, I fear, are apostates for having brought dishonor upon the Christian church. They nevertheless are far from being humbled, but impertinently thrust themselves and their supposed claims to attention, upon the church that they have grieved and injured. Their much-talked-of repentance appears to us to be more early than deep, and to be more pretentious than true; but at the same time, if a man has fallen, and even if the church is obliged to put him away, we do not deliver such a one to Satan that he may *blaspheme*, but that he may learn *not* to blaspheme! The objective of church discipline should always be the good of the person who has to endure it. There is no more Christ-like work anywhere than for elder Christians to be watching over the young ones, checking their first declensions, nipping the evil in the bud—no nobler work unless it is the restoration of those who have actually gone astray. Oh, as you would that others should seek you in a similar case, beloved, seek the wandering sheep, remembering that there will be more joy in the presence of the angels of God over one restored wanderer, than over 99 that went not astray!

Another mode of usefulness is for Christians to *seek the edification of one another*. It is as great a good to the State to maintain a citizen in health as to introduce a stranger into citizenship. How much might some of you do for the edification of younger Christians if you would but seek opportunities? Ah, Christian, I fear you accumulate experience, and you gather knowledge—but the whole of it becomes unprofitable because you are not diligent in its use for the good of the church!

Furthermore, beloved, some of you may not be able to accomplish these things to any large extent, but God entrusts you with wealth; then make use of your substance for Him—and in truth, whatever the form of your gift, let your work correspond to it. According to the grace given, let the work rendered be; let each pound yield its own interest. As you are set in the body as a member, exercise the office of your peculiar membership, and be not slack in it. Let there be no sluggishness, but let us all, in the name of Him who on yonder tree poured out His life, endeavor that from this day, with double zeal, we may be found "serving the Lord."

III. So I shall pass on very briefly to notice, in the third place, THE COMMENDATION which is due to this service.

To serve the Lord is surely *the natural element of godliness*. Heavenly spirits enjoy unbroken rest, but they find their rest in serving God day and night! If you could restrict the Christian from the service of God, you would deny him his highest joy! Surely it is as much the element of a Christian to do good as for a fish to swim, or a bird to fly, or a tree to yield her fruits. Oh, then, if you would let the new-born nature fully develop itself, you must be serving the Lord!

To serve the Lord is *the highest honor*. How men pride themselves on being attached to the train of great men! How proud they are of wearing the livery of princes! But what must it be to have God, the Eternal, for your Master; to have Jesus Christ as your gracious helper; to have the Holy Spirit as your divine guide in all that you are called to do? To serve the Lord is to stand on a level with the angels—to worship the same Master as they do who are in the presence of the divine majesty! It is better to serve God than rule a kingdom! No, he is both a king and a priest who has thoroughly entered into the service of the Most High!

To serve God is *to enjoy the highest pleasure*. I will guarantee you that the happiest members of any church are the most diligent. Those who sit still easily imagine sorrows; idlers are those who indulge in criticism of other people's service, and find themselves most happy when they can pull other men's work to pieces. This bitter spirit dies in the atmosphere of hard work; doubts and fears fly before sacred activity! There is a kind of spiritual indigestion which seizes on the great proportion of professors, so that they never appear to enjoy life at all; it were a pity that they should; it were a pity that those should have happiness who will not render unto God the tribute of grateful labor, for the prayer meeting is neglected by them; they are not teaching children, nor exhorting grown-ups; they are neither helping others to work, nor working themselves, and yet they reckon that they are to have the rewards of divine grace! A whip for their shoulders is surely a portion far more suitable than a promise for their souls! God usually takes good care to give a man the file if he will not brighten himself by service. He that will not keep off the filth by the constant scour of activity shall find himself cast into the pungent lye of trouble—wherein he shall be fretted, and consumed until the rust is removed.

If you would *educate your soul*, you must be active! No man grows to be a perfect Christian by lying on the bed of sloth. Our manhood is developed by *exercise*! The soldier grows into the veteran amidst the smoke of battle; sailors learn not their skills on dry land, and Christian can never be educated so that the whole of their spiritual manhood can be developed by merely listening to sermons or witnessing the holy example of others. That strength which is to be increased must be used; that knowledge which is to be multiplied must be communicated. To be content with what you have done is to go backward! To use what you have is to make progress and to be enriched. Onward, then, for perfection lies *ahead* of you!

My dear brothers and sisters, there are 10,000 things that I might say with regard to Christian activity, all of which ought to excite your minds to present action. Are you patriots? You cannot serve your country better than by serving your Lord! Are you philanthropists? You cannot bless the human race more effectually than by seeking to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ in it! Do you sigh and cry over the woes of others? You cannot better redress them than by the gospel, which is the universal remedy! Do you deplore the abundant ignorance around you? No light can scatter it like the knowledge of Christ's gospel! Are you afraid of the future? Do you dread revolution, and anarchy? Nothing can settle the pillars of order like the testimony of Christ Jesus! In fact, there is nothing you can do that is holier, more worthy of your best nature, more filled with blessing than "*serving the Lord*."

IV. And now to close, I shall speak for a minute upon THE PRESENT NEED OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

Brothers and sisters, there is always need to be serving the Lord for your own sake. You cannot be holy and happy; you cannot be what a Christian ought to be unless you are evermore engaged in Jehovah's cause! There is great need for you, my dear brother, to serve God, because I fear so few professors are doing so. I would not judge harshly, but as I look down the roll, and notice the number that have given their names to the church, I cannot help fetching a sigh over one and another as I remember that the *name* is all that we at present can call our own, so far as we can judge. Oh, if only the Christians in London who are joined in fellowship in our churches were all zealous, I am sure we should see brighter and

better days than we do now! Do not, however, be quick to accuse others, but seek to be awakened yourself. There is need enough of diligence in this wretched city; I was reading but the other day that thrilling book, *The Seven Curses of London*, and any one of these seven curses is enough to give a man heart-ache if he will thoroughly understand it. That curse of drink, especially—what is to be done with it? How few Christians take to heart the abominable intoxication which pollutes the masses of our population! While again our social evil, the very mention of which is enough to make a man sick—are we forever to shut our eyes to it, and talk as though we were dwelling in a Jerusalem—when this city is infinitely more like Sodom? Why, the ignorance, the poverty, the misery, the iniquity of London reek and stink in the nostrils of Almighty God, and yet we gather in a little quiet place by ourselves, and we use the rose water of self-complacency, and think that everything goes well! The devil is swallowing men wholesale! Hell enlarges herself! The Christian church scarcely makes any progress at all—certainly no progress at all comparable to the advance of the population! Souls are not saved! Error is rampant! On all sides there are signs of great degeneration, and if Christians do not awaken themselves now, we might almost say to them, “Awake, arise, or be forever fallen.” If you could but stand by one deathbed where a soul is taking its leap in the dark; if for once in your lives you could hear the cries of a spirit as it enters into the thick darkness which is to be its everlasting abode; if you could but have painted before your eyes in truth the last tremendous day, and the multitudes on the left hand! If you could but gaze for a moment at the heaven which your own children, I fear, may miss through your indifference, or if you could but look but for a second upon that hell to which multitudes of your neighbors are descending every day, surely you would be down on your knees saying, “Forgive me, great God, for all my past neglect, and from this hour cleanse me from the blood of souls by the blood of Jesus, and help me to be instant in season and out of season in instructing my fellow men; never from this day until I die may I neglect an opportunity of telling men how they may be saved.”

Ah, dear friends, I had hoped to have spoken to you most earnestly, but I fear I have been to you only a model of that coldness which I have condemned! Woe is me that I, too, should be guilty! I chide the evil far more in myself than in you, and pray to be saved from it. May we all, as pastors, deacons, elders, members, Sunday school teachers, and workers of all sorts, be from this good hour much more with God in prayer, and much more zealous in our labors, that it may never have to be laid to our charge again, that while we were not slothful in business, we were cold in spirit, and were not serving the Lord. God bless you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ROMANS 12.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST!

**By the grace of God, for all 63 volumes of
C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English,
and 574 Spanish translations, all free, visit:
www.spurgeongems.org**